

Minutes of: RADCLIFFE CABINET COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 27 May 2021

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
Councillors C Birchmore, C Cummins, J Lancaster, C Morris
and M Smith

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor B Mortenson

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Beth Mortenson.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by a member of the public, Judi Sheppard:

The documents relating to the tender for the operation and management of Radcliffe market, 'method of operation' (page 20) clearly shows that the use of the piazza (when appropriate) is for specialist markets, events and community activities. As far as I'm aware the piazza is a public place so why have the council entered in to a 5 year agreement accepting that they will not grant any rights or privileges to any person or company to hold or conduct the same type of markets within Radcliffe for the duration of this agreement, therefore preventing any community activities or street events.

Supplementary question - Other towns host popular themed weekend markets, from trendy street food, farmers markets, Christmas markets etc all of which would be of benefit to the town and bring a heart to Radcliffe. Bearing in mind that one of the social objectives of Radcliffe market is to 'support the community by continuing to support township events and community fundraising events' - How do the council intend to overcome these prohibitions and ensure that any future contracts do not have any clause preventing the quality of life through events and promotion of social cohesion.

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien responded:

When the agreement was first put in place with Radcliffe market it was a unique offer and a new working model. As part of that, time was needed to protect the market and let it find its feet by preventing direct competition on its own doorstep. The market is a fantastic space and is very popular with the community at its heart. The market board works well to encourage community involvement and anyone with any concerns or requests for community events to get in touch with the Board and work around the arrangement.

The council are committed to ensuring that the town centre developments in Radcliffe maximize the opportunity for local residents to come together and engage in a diverse and exciting programme of community and cultural events. Central to this will be the use of the public realm, and careful consideration and consultation will inform the design linking the piazza to the Hub, Market and Market Chambers buildings. We will be engaging with the Radcliffe Regeneration Advisory Group, Community Groups and local businesses to develop our design proposals and will explore design of the public realm in more detail in the coming months.

We recognize the concerns raised and are presently discussing the details of the management arrangements required to safeguard accessibility to our public spaces for all.

Councillor Mike Smith gave some context to how the issue arose, and officers advised that the council's legal team could investigate and provide advice in order to resolve any dispute.

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by a member of the public, Bob Birchmore:

As laid out in the prospectus, the Government Levelling Up Fund is a competition, there will be winners and losers. If Bury fail to secure Levelling Up funds, will the proposed scheme for Radcliffe still proceed and would the timescale be unaffected?

Supplementary question - Apart from the speculative Levelling Up scheme funding, is there any secure funding in place for Radcliffe regeneration??

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien responded:

The council has worked hard to come up with a high quality scheme with support from partners across the borough. This scheme was about more than physical regeneration but was about improving people's lives. This put our bid in a strong position, so hopefully it would be successful, but if not, the council had earmarked monies from the capital programme over the next 3 years. This demonstrated a clear commitment and would allow the continuation of the project. The plans would be reviewed, but a scheme would come forward.

The council are committed to delivering the projects outlined in the 2020 Radcliffe SRF and have prioritized the Hub project based on assessment of need and funding opportunities. In March 2021 Cabinet approved the acquisition of buildings within Radcliffe town centre; facilitating the creation of the development zone required to construct the new Hub. A detailed options appraisal has been undertaken, to ensure that the proposed project outputs are deliverable within the available budget envelope and timescales outlined within the LUF programme guidance. Given that Bury has priority status to receive funding, the council are confident that a high quality bid submission, aligned with the LUF appraisal requirements, will position our project favourably. Monies have also been earmarked from the council's capital programme over the next three years to support the delivery of regeneration schemes.

The Strategic Regeneration Framework also sets out a number of other key developments, including a new Secondary School and new residential developments that will provide much needed homes for local residents. Funding has already been secured to deliver the school and the brownfield land fund has been used to bring forward School street. The council is continuing to work with our partners, including Homes England, to bring forward the East Lancs Paper Mill.

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by a member of the public, Alan Sheppard:

On the 19th May there was a press release from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, published on the gov.uk website, in which it was announced that a further 57 areas have been given funding to boost towns high streets. This funding is the Government's 'Welcome Back Fund' and yet again Radcliffe, a town much in need of such funding, has been awarded nothing. Obviously, funds would only be awarded if the ruling council was to make an application. Please can the Chair outline what, if any, application has been made on behalf of the town of Radcliffe? If no application has been made for this specific funding, why not?

Supplementary question - The regeneration of Radcliffe has supposedly been a priority for the Labour led council since 2011 so please can the Chair tell us what work has been done to prepare an application for a share this funding and what is the current status of Bury Council submitting such an application to the 'Welcome Back Fund'?

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien responded:

The announcement that a further 57 areas have been awarded funding to boost town centres stems from the Future High Streets Fund that was launched in December 2018.

Bury Council submitted an initial expression of interest for Prestwich, which at this time as at a more advanced stage in terms of masterplanning than other town centres. Unfortunately, this submission was not awarded any funds and the council was not invited to submit further bids in future phases of this fund. Bury was therefore not eligible to bid for the recent award of funds which started over two years ago.

Since 2018, the council has clearly positioned itself to be in a much stronger position to bid for future funding to help regenerate Radcliffe through the Strategic Regeneration Framework work. Indeed, the items on today's agenda are very much related to this - seeking the endorsement of this Committee to bid for the Levelling Up Fund.

In response to the supplementary question, as indicated in the main response, a tremendous amount of work has taken place to ensure that we are in a strong position to bid for regeneration monies. The latest fund is the Levelling Up Fund and we hope to ensure that we are able to access the full £20 million that is the maximum per bid. We will continue to explore future rounds of bidding of the Levelling up Fund and other funding as it becomes available, including the Shared Prosperity fund.

It should be noted that the authority has been successful in other funding bids – most notably through our partnership working with STAR Academies to secure £15 million for a new secondary school in Radcliffe and also the Brownfield Land Fund, to bring forward much needed new affordable homes.

4 MINUTES

Agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 LEVELLING UP BID - RADCLIFFE CIVIC HUB - PART A

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report regarding the proposed Levelling Up Fund bid for a new Civic Hub in Radcliffe town centre.

With regards to stakeholder engagement, Members noted that the bid is based on a clear case for need and for change, and key to that is the level of stakeholder engagement. This is formed part of the wider SRF, which had wide governance arrangements with a Delivery Board and Advisory Board enabling a wide range of partners to be involved and webinars to ensure engagement despite Covid related disruptions. Engagement had included the full suite of council services, TfGM, GMCA, CCG colleagues as well as community groups, existing businesses and facilities.

It was noted that the bid was note about designs for the site but instead focussed on the drivers for the work. As such, the specifics of the design were not in place yet, and research and engagement would inform the ultimate design, which was only in concept stage currently.

With regards to the public services hub, it was noted that moving office staff would have the benefit of increasing footfall to retail facilities nearby, although this was only part of the plan. The hub would provide one space for multiple council services, making access easier for residents and negating the need for multiple visits. The detail as to which services would be based there and how they would be housed was still to be determined.

Decision:

1. That Radcliffe Cabinet Committee recommends to Cabinet the development and submission a Levelling Up Bid application for a new Civic Hub in Radcliffe town centre. Final approval of the submissions on or prior to 18 June 2021 will be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
2. Recommends to Cabinet expenditure up to £125,000 to the Radcliffe project as required to support the development of proposals submitted as the bid to the Levelling Up Fund to enable the delivery of the project within the required timescales.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

7 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Agreed: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item.

8 LEVELLING UP BID - RADCLIFFE CIVIC HUB - PART B

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the confidential report which provided an update on progress made and the detail beneath the assumptions, financial planning and possible social outcomes of the proposals.

Decision:

That Radcliffe Cabinet Committee:

1. Notes progress to date on the development of the Radcliffe Civic Hub.
2. Recommends to Cabinet the development and submission a Levelling Up Bid application for a new Civic Hub in Radcliffe town centre. Final approval of the submissions on or prior to 18 June 2021 will be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
3. Recommends to Cabinet expenditure up to £125,000 to the Radcliffe project as required to support the development of proposals submitted as the bid to the Levelling Up Fund to enable the delivery of the project within the required timescales.

COUNCILLOR E O'BRIEN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 4.00 pm and ended at 4.52 pm)